TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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The Mission of the Church

HARRY B. ADAMS

• After his retirement, Hensley Henson, the bishop of Durham, made it a practice to visit in various parishes. On one occasion the minister said to him after the service: "I hope, my Lord, that you were not offended by my heresies." To which Henson replied in his most acid tone: "Not the heresies, my good man. It was the incredibility of the whole thing."

A sensitive person may often react in such fashion to the church. Here is the hour set aside for worship, and it becomes an hour filled with a stale, dull, meaningless routine to which no one pays much attention or gives any thought. A group of men and women give themselves in devoted concern to the church, but their interest and time are occupied with absurd trivia. The church becomes a social institution almost exclusively. It was almost with a sense of embarrassment that one church group suggested that they ought to have something devotional in their programs. They had one of their members read a brief passage from Omar Khayyam!

Sometime ago an article in *The Christian Century* opened with this statement which a friend made to the author: "Why your church is just like a country club, isn't it?" After some searching of the situation, the anonymous author of the article had to admit that it was. Depending on the locale, the church may appear to bear strong resemblance to the Grange, or the Rebekahs, or the Red Men, or the Odd Fellows. Looking at the church as it actually is, one is often led to exclaim: "It's the incredibility of the whole thing."

Part of the failure of the church is the limited conception of its mission. Certainly this is not the whole story, but until the church comes to clarity about its mission it cannot possibly fulfill the purpose for which it exists. Perhaps we might begin with the church as it is, with a description of what some churches conceive their mission to be. We shall seek to understand their own conception of their ministry as we look at what they actually do.

First, there are churches whose mission it is to be caretakers of a cemetery. In the study of Rural Social Organization of Frederick County, Maryland, this observation is made about the church: "They (the churches) are also the guardians of the dead. Most of them are centered among stone markers that denote the final resting place of former members. The kin of the deceased have more than a nominal interest

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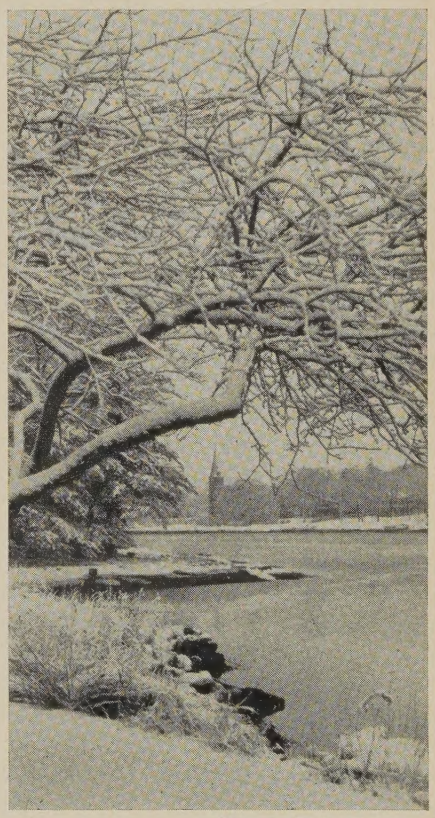

Photo by Philip Gendreau

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March, 1959

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in the church. This fact has undoubtedly played an important role in the persistency of the open-country rural church. And, when they die, the church will continue its sentry responsibility over them and their family."

Often it is the actual bones of the dead in the pleasant grove beside the church building which are the raison d'etre for its existence. But the church may become the caretaker of the cemetery even without the bones of dead men in its yard. Its mission may be conceived as that of the conservator of the past. For such a church it is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever, but a particular set of customs, forms or ideas which the church seeks to maintain, yesterday, today and forever. Certain shibboleths become hallowed with the sanctity of age and must be preserved at all costs. The customs, forms or ideas which are preserved with such care may have little pertinence for the people to whom the church speaks, but this becomes of secondary importance when the mission of the church is to care for the cemetery which contains the dead ways of the past.

Second, there are some churches who conceive their mission to be the preservation of a particular institution. In place after place, three or four or five separate churches have remained in existence long after they have ceased to minister effectively, and when actually the multiplicity of church organizations does damage both to the Christian cause and to the whole community. Most often the union of churches, or even a cooperative enterprise, comes only when each of the churches has become so weak that it cannot possibly maintain itself any longer.

In the national journals of many denominations, there are reports of ministers who are moving from the First Church at Little Corners to the First Church at Bigger Corners. Usually the minister gives an account of the accomplishments of his ministry. A typical statement will run something like this: "During the 3½ years of his ministry, the church budget was increased by 26 percent and the average attendance at Sunday school increased from 75 to 86. A new furnace was installed in the church at a cost of $2,400 and repairs of $600 made on the parsonage. New chairs were purchased for the Sunday school and plans were made for an addition to the building."

Surely it is difficult to report in a brief paragraph the true ministry of a church. Statistics, of which we are fond, may be an indication that something is really happening in a church. But without question it is true that many of the statistics reveal exactly what they seem to: the fact that the primary interest of the church is in maintaining itself as an institution. Even evangelism becomes the effort simply to add more financial or statistical strength to the church. Every prospective member is judged by the contribution, financial or otherwise, which he will make to the institution.

A third type of church conceives its mission to be the creation of a society of self righteous sanctified people. Such a church seeks to withdraw from the corruption of the secular society. Those who enter the fellowship are motivated to seek a personal holiness, which may be defined in various ways. Piety may be equated with the refusal to perform certain types of activities, such as dancing, card playing, etc. Sanctity may be achieved through certain intense, emotional religious experiences. The focus of interest is on the assurance of salvation, understood in extremely personal, individualistic terms.

One other type of church can be mentioned briefly. This is the church which conceives itself as a social agency in the community, and its mission as that of some kind of community service. A situation which one of our students encountered last year will serve to illustrate. He was working as a youth director in a church in a small community. The church has a gym which was used every Sunday night, not only by the young people who happen to be members of the church, but by many of the youth of the community. By direct order to the Christian education committee and the minister, the student was prohibited from planning any kind of study program or worship experience for the Sunday evening meetings.

The prevalent conception of those outside the church but sympathetic to it is that it is an agency for the welfare of the community. Every pastor runs into the amiable atheists who are quick to declare that they wouldn't live in a town without a church. The church is useful as a leaven for the moral tone of the community. It serves as an admirable character-building agency for the young people. All kinds of good causes will be supported by it, whether building hospitals or laying sewers or planning parks. Within the church nice people can meet one another and get better acquainted. Not only those outside the church, but also many within, justify the church and their support of it because of its contribution to the community.

If we are to be critical of these churches which have so understood their mission, it must be with the recognition that in each instance the church has grasped a partial picture of its purpose. The church is rightfully a conservative and conserving institution, but it must be saving of that which is living within its heritage, not that which is dead. The church is and must be an institution, and must maintain its institutional forms. Without the form and the structure the church simply cannot function in the human situation. Certainly in its ministry the church rightly hopes that its efforts result in transformed persons and in more wholesome communities. All of these are within the mission of the church. None of them is the mission of the church.

As we seek a more complete statement of the mission of the church, it is with the recognition that any such statement is partial. Such an effort is justified only because the church must constantly be renewing and deepening its understanding of what its mission is. It must state again and again what it is about, in the hope that in this grappling with

s purpose new light will be ranted.

To guide our thinking may we set efore us three brief passages of cripture. In the prayer of Jesus in ne seventeenth chapter of *John* we ear these words of the Lord: "I lorified thee on earth having ac- omplished the work which thou avest me to do." Here in brief ashion Jesus sums up the purpose f his ministry. His work was done n obedience to the Father and to ne glory of God. His mission was ot creating an institution, giving a ew law, or setting right the ills of nen. The second passage is Paul's amiliar description of the church s he writes to the Christian com- munity at Corinth. "Now you are ne body of Christ and individually nembers of it." The church as the ody of Christ is entrusted with the ninistry and mission of Jesus Christ o the world. The church becomes ne continuing incarnation, the isible expression of the will and the urpose and the love of God in the uman situation.

The implication in these two assages of scripture comes to clear atement in the benediction which loses the first half of the letter to ne *Ephesians*. "Now to him who by he power at work within us is able o do far more abundantly than all hat we ask or think, to him be glory n the church and in Christ Jesus to ll generations, for ever and ever. *Amen*." Even as our Lord gave glory o God in and through his earthly ninistry, so it is the mission of the ody of Christ to make known the lory of God and to give glory to im.

Again we can make the distinction etween the ways in which the hurch carries out its mission and he mission itself. It is not the mis- ion of the church to maintain an nstitution, though it will need to lo so if it is going to fulfill its mis- ion. It is not the mission of the hurch to be a social service agency n the community, though it may ninister in this way as it seeks to ive glory to God. We understand he church only when we see it in elation to its Creator. We glimpse ts mission only when we see the

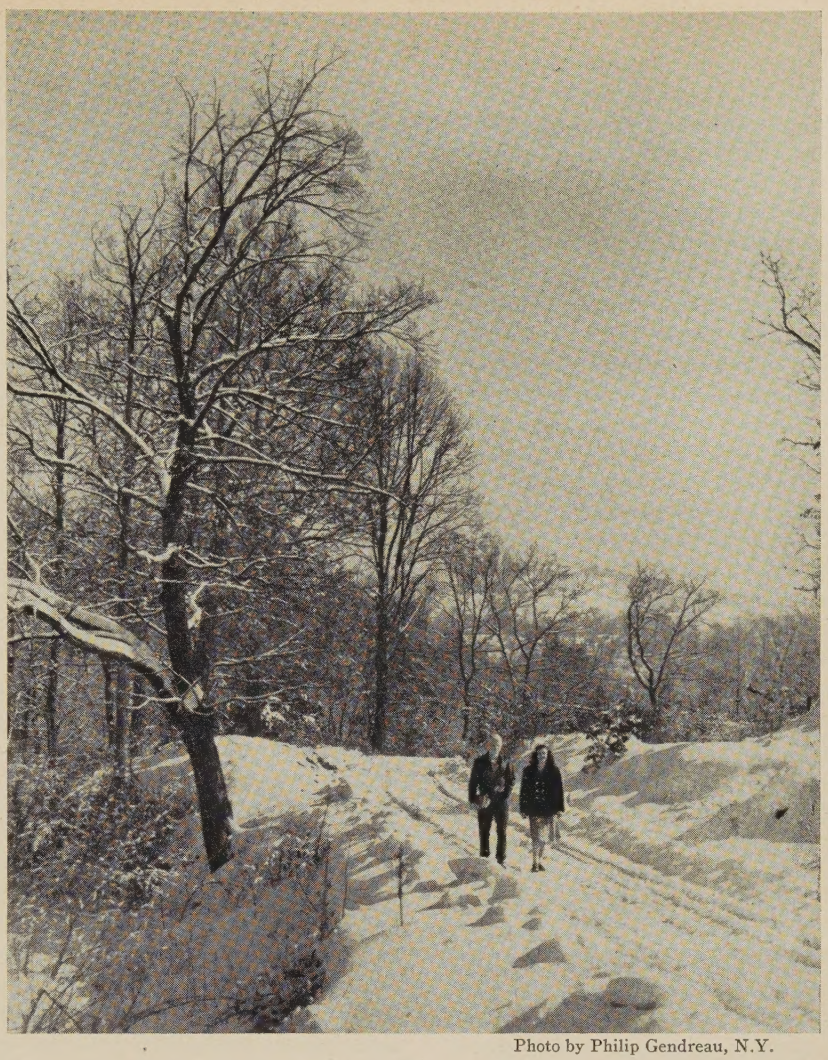

Photo by Philip Gendreau, N.Y.

church responding to God and doing its work that it may give praise, honor and glory to him.

How does the church give glory to God? How does the church carry out its mission in a particular place —here in the open country or there in the small cross-roads community? The work of the church is the continuation of the work of its Lord on earth. We may talk of a three-fold ministry of Jesus Christ, a ministry indicated when we talk of our Lord as prophet and priest and king.

The church gives glory to God as it fulfills its prophetic role. The church bears witness to the truth of God which has been made known to the fellowship of faith. Always the church must hear another word be- side the word of men spoken in special interest through custom and tradition. In its preaching, in its teaching, in its being, the church speaks what it has heard spoken to it by God. The church on the corner proclaims to the world of men that there is the dimension of eternity. The church on the corner makes known the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and calls men to love and obedience. When the church be- comes simply a fellowship creating good will and instilling noble vir- tures, it has lost the word which it was created to speak. In faithful wit- ness to its Lord it will tell men what God has done and lay upon them the demand of the Father.

Then the church will give glory to God as it fulfills its priestly role. The church shares many of the

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characteristics of other organizations of men. But there is no other agency or institution on earth which centers its life around the encounter between God and man in worship. The church brings each individual into communion with the eternal. Through the church the word of forgiveness and reconciliation is spoken. The ministry of the church brings to men the hope of God. In Protestantism particularly we have stressed the values of fellowship which the church offers. We have used the need which people have for intimate personal relationships with others to bind them to the church as we have consciously sought to create this kind of community. All of this is good, except when we smother the priestly function of the church in the warmth of friendly fellowship. The church gives its glory to God when it bows in worship before him and brings men into encounter with him.

Finally, even as Christ is king so the church has a kingly role to fulfill. The nature of the kingship of Christ is perhaps revealed most dramatically in John's account of the last supper which Jesus ate with his disciples. He rose from his place, took a basin of water and a towel and washed the feet of his disciples. Here the Lord, the Teacher, the King performed the task of the lowliest servant. This is the nature of kingship in God's Kingdom. The greatest of all is the servant of all. The church gives glory to God as it serves the people about it, as it serves its community, as it ministers in humble service to the world. Surely the church which claims as Lord one who healed the diseases of men, who sat at the table of sinners, who acted with compassion to meet the needs of men, that church will find itself deeply involved in a ministry of love.

We began with the words of the bishop of Durham, "It's the incredibility of the whole thing," spoken as he witnessed what he considered a travesty of the true function of the church. Yet the church is never more incredible than when it is most truly the church and fulfilling its function most completely. The church with all of its blindness, its failure, its frailty, its stumbling ways, is called to make known the glory of God and to give glory to him. This is our task. This is our calling. "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

Monument to Church Care

• In an article featured in the December 3rd issue of *The Christian Century,* "From the East to the West," the weekly's associate editor, Margaret Frakes, reports on the West German refugee city of Espelkamp—a monument to the churches' concern for the homeless who have fled from East Germany.

At the instigation of Swedish Lutheran Pastor Birger Forrell and with the cooperation of the West German government, Hilfswerk, the German Protestant relief organization, has built a city for 10,000 formerly homeless refugees. From the nucleus of a closed munitions plant and arsenal located in a forest near the small industrial city of Lubecke and with initial labor furnished by returning prisoners of war, the new community has risen to curving rows of modern apartment houses, small residences, one-story factories housing small industries, glass-walled schools and community centers. From the first, a group of American Mennonites was on hand to help: not only with the distribution of relief supplies from overseas, but with pick and shovel.

Espelkamp is currently served by two Lutheran churches, one Mennonite church and one Roman Catholic church. Community plans for construction to accommodate 20,000 residents are now on the drawing boards.

Religious Drama

• The television dramatic series, "This is the Answer," will offer the following films during the month of March:

March 1—"A Walk in the Dark," a half-hour drama dealing with juvenile delinquency.

March 8—"Feet of Clay," probes the need for honesty in civic affairs and the influence of adult example on young people.

March 15—"Ah! Eighteen,"—the pressures of conformity on teenagers.

March 22—"The Sin of John Hamilton" deals with the problem of suicide.

March 29—"Valley of Shadows" answers fear of death.

These will be seen on key stations across the nation in the new television series dealing with problems of serious national concern. Filmed professionally in Hollywood, the series is produced by the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Tennessee Minister Receives Recognition

• The Rev. Sam Varnell, a Methodist minister of five small churches in the Piney Flats district of eastern Tennessee, received recognition in a feature article in *The Saturday Evening Post* for December 13, 1958. Harold H. Martin, who interviewed Mr. Varnell and wrote the article, tells about the outstanding work of this minister and why he chooses to serve an obscure, run-down country parish. A year ago, Sam Varnell was nominated the Rural Minister of the Year for Tennessee.

National Library Week

• April 12-18 is National Library Week. In villages, cities and towns across the country the event will be marked by a wide variety of community activities. This year, the Religious Publishers Group is promoting National Library Week. Why not begin your church library or bookmobile at this time?

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Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Rural Development Program

• A total of 103 rural counties in 31 states are now directly involved in the Rural Development Program, Ezra T. Benson, Secretary of Agriculture, noted in the 3rd Annual Report on the Program, sent to the President, 1958.

"Through research, education, and community action at the county and trade area level, the Rural Development Program is helping people help themselves. . . . It has stimulated . . . job opportunities, better farming methods, young people's educational and guidance programs, and home and community betterment" through 200 specific projects.

"The program has brought town and country people closer together in the pilot areas. And together they are working out solutions to their common problems.

"The objective is to help people in rural counties make the best use of the resources they have. The eventual success of the program will be measured not so much in the results now being achieved in pilot counties, but in the extent to which the pilot area results cause other areas to initiate similar programs, utilizing the experience gained in the pilot program."

Excerpts from certain of the state reports follow.

Alabama: "Chilton County in central Alabama has large timber resources. In 1957 the county Rural Development committee launched a campaign to greatly increase timber handling facilities, thus adding jobs and a new market for farmers owning woodlots. Through the work of the committee and local businessmen, one timber yard has already been renovated and enlarged, its equipment improved. Five workers are now employed all year round in the yard, and some 80 workers have part-time jobs in the surrounding forests supplying this new timber market."

Arkansas: "A labor survey in three pilot counties showed that operators of small farms badly needed off-farm employment but wanted to remain living in their home areas. Rural Development committees and agency workers are cooperating with local businessmen to develop rural industries that will lead to more jobs. Brochures advertising natural resources, transportation, and other factors of interest to industry; improvement of handicraft production and marketing; contacts with outside businessmen and credit agencies are some of their projects."

Georgia: "New markets for farmers' crops have been built through the Rural Development Program. In Meriwether County, for example, program workers and lay leaders helped organize a peach growers' marketing co-op and construct a packing shed. As a result, a far greater volume of peaches is being shipped from the county, and about 170 part-time workers are employed packing the fruit."

Illinois: "Counseling and farm planning among families on small farms has been stepped up since inauguration of the program. In the past 18 months, 40 farmers developed basic farm plans covering 2,700 acres. Vegetable marketing agreements were made with several firms in the area, including a pickle manufacturing company in Chicago. Educational meetings to help small farmers do a better job of production and marketing have a central place in this program, and the development agent, working with the regular extension staff, has held many of these meetings."

Indiana: "In the field of agricultural improvement, besides the egg production and marketing effort cited, a feeder calf auction was established; several farm plans were redrawn to include production of small fruits and vegetables, thus

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utilizing labor more efficiently; and extension of credit, mainly through the Farmers Home Administration, brought about improvement on many farms. Soil Conservation Service assigned additional workers for soil surveys and conservation planning, and about 4,200 acres have been mapped due to the Rural Development Program."

Kentucky: "Poultry raising for commercial markets (15 new flocks of 1,000 birds each were established in one area last year); increasing production of sheep; reforestation; small watershed promotion; vocational guidance counseling among rural youth; health facilities improvement."

Louisiana: "Community leaders and extension agents assigned to the program in each parish are aiming for these objectives: Increased output of commercial vegetables, dairy products, and livestock to offset declining cotton production; community programs of better farming and home making; rural industries expansion."

Michigan: "In addition to tourist industry [in the Upper Peninsula] promotion and training, other projects are under way to establish more rural industries, train workers, and provide job placement counseling. One county has set up a rural counseling program using services of the Michigan Employment Service, local industry, and labor groups."

Missouri: "Several industries have also recently been established in the development area. These include a charcoal plant which employs 30 people, and a clothing manufacturer employing 100. An interstate handicraft show in Taney County (attended by 690 people from 13 counties), purchase of industrial parks, and job training programs for adults are other important projects in the area to help farm people increase their incomes through off-farm work. Rural Development committees, and agency personnel cooperating with them, are active in all these projects."

Nebraska: "Many farms in Sherman County are going through a period of transition from a dry land type of operation to irrigation farming. A local irrigation and power development and individual wells supply water for irrigation farming in the county. To help farmers adopt practices and crops best suited to this new type of farming, the county extension staff has set up two demonstration farms. Their operators receive advice regarding planting rates, fertilizer use, cropping, weed and insect control, and harvesting. Records will be kept and results widely publicized in the county. Parallel educational work among farmers will emphasize the most effective use of irrigation systems—a major agricultural goal in the county Rural Development Program."

Texas: "Shelby County's Rural Development Committee, representing rural communities in the county and farm and business groups, gave high priority to establishing better vegetable marketing facilities as an initial project in their program. Agencies working with farmers and community leaders assembled information on the county's potential vegetable production. Local news media publicized the project throughout the county. On the basis of interest among farmers in vegetable production and land and labor available, as shown by the committee survey, two local chambers of commerce raised money to build marketing sheds and manage the market. Agricultural agencies issued cooperatively a growers' guide for the use of new producers. This year many families on small farms in the county will realize $100 to $200 additional income as a result of the project."

Secretary Benson notes that local and national church leaders are participating, among farm, business, civic, and other agencies. The report is available on application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

Death Notice

• Died recently at the First Neglected Church on the corner of Worldly Avenue and Busy Street. Born many years ago in the midst of great zeal and fervor for the works of the Kingdom. She was a strong healthy child, fed largely on a staunch faith, aiding presence, and a yearning to grow in grace. She grew into world-wide prominence as the most important activity of the Soul of Man.

For the past several years Sister Program-of-the-Church had been in dire health, gradually wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of knees, coldness of heart, inactivity of soul, and weakness of purpose and will-power. At last she was but a shadow of her former self. Her brothers, Mid-Week Service, Class-meeting, Family Night and Study Group died many years before.

Experts, including Dr. Joiner, Dr. Excuse, Dr. Imtoobusy and Dr. Reform, disagreed as to the cause of her fatal illness. They had administered large doses of contests, socials, drives, awards and organization, but to no avail. A postmortem showed a deficiency of spiritual food, coupled with a lack of faith and heartfelt religion. Shameless desertion and non-support were the contributing causes. Only a few were present at her death, sobbing over the past beauty and power and the days when "the church was filled to every pew."

Her funeral was held in the chapel, but few were present. Carefully selected pallbearers were urged to tenderly bear her remains away, but failed to appear because of a pogo pole vaulting in Powsheik. Her favorite hymns were not sung but Imamodern sang "The Man Upstairs;" few had any idea of who this supernatural might be. She was laid to rest in the Cemetery of Bygone Glories.

In honor of her going the church doors will remain locked on weeknights save the first Wednesday of each month when the Ladies' Pink Lemonade Society will serve refreshments to the Men's Pogo Team.

—From the Parish paper, *The Good News,* Memphis, Mo.

Lord's Acre Movie

A beautiful, color sound movie, epicting what the Lord's Acre plan an do for a church and the people ho participate in it is now availble. Entitled "This is the Lord's cre," it may be procured on a ental basis for the cost of postage oth ways; or it may be purchased r $160.00. For booking or other iformation about this movie or ther Lord's Acre promotional maerial, write to:

THE RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT
Farmers Federation Co-op
Asheville, North Carolina

4-H Club Project

Methodist Rural Adjustment Policy*

DANIEL M. SCHORES

To help us work toward more fective interdenominational ties in e state of Missouri, the following olicy statement has been adopted y the Methodist officials of the ate. We hope that it will promote etter understanding between ourlves and fellow cooperating deominations.

We recognize that, at present, the enominational approach is the preailing pattern for church organizaon. In most cases friendly competion acts as a stimulus to effective ork. Where adequate concentraons of population are present, we elieve that several denominational hurches can serve better than any ne alone. However, certain underopulated areas demand various orms of cooperative work.

Several basic principles might be ated:

1. We desire to cooperate in any pportunity where a total commuity can be more adequately served.

2. Cooperation must not be erely for the sake of cooperation ut must represent the best means by which the Christian gospel can be presented.

3. The best form of cooperation is that which serves the largest number of people most adequately over an extended period of time.

4. Cooperative endeavors must recognize the basic right of each individual to believe as his conscience dictates.

5. A cooperative program must ensure adequate pastoral care and program without disruption due to a change of ministerial leadership.

6. No program of cooperation can be so binding as to exclude the possibility of change of organization when conditions warrant.

Let us apply these principles to specific plans of cooperation, which are listed in the order of preference by the Methodist Church:

Council of Churches

We wholeheartedly support the world, national, state and county councils of churches as well as various forms of local councils. Likewise, ministerial associations are excellent means of Christian fellowship, better understanding and good public relations.

Community Church

The true community church is a church that is related to a denomination but, finding itself alone in a rural neighborhood or small town, strives to serve the total community in the name of Christ. Ideally, all rural churches should seek to be community churches. Here we recommend an open or affiliate membership for those who will not become full members of the prevailing denomination.

Exchange of Field

A comity agreement through which two or more denominations agree to exchange fields of work is most agreeable. Wisdom dictates giving a particular church the opportunity to serve a community without unfair competition. Our *Discipline* gives legal sanction to this type of exchange.

Interdenominational Larger Parish

Where pastors and congregations of two or more denominations are willing to work cooperatively with a unified program, such a parish may be satisfactory. However, a change

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* From an address before the Missouri ouncil of Churches' Town and Country hurch Seminar, October 27, 1958.

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in any of the cooperating ministers may jeopardize the program.

Yoked Field

There are a few areas where several small churches of various denominations cannot serve effectively alone and where no neighboring church of their own denomination can be placed on a circuit or parish with them. Here a "yoked field" might be worked out where a pastor of one denomination serves all cooperating churches. It demands a superior type minister who will try to understand and promote varying denominational interests. Normally the yoked field would seem a temporary arrangement.

Federated Church

Since this form of cooperative effort has been widely advocated we will give it extra consideration.

Methodism finds it hard to work under the federated arrangement. Legally, our property is held by the Annual Conference, not a local congregation. Major improvements and property transactions must be handled by the Quarterly Conference, presided over by a District Superintendent. It is simpler if all property is in the name of one denomination. Also, as our pastors are part of a connectional system which assures each man a church and each church a pastor, it is difficult to change pastors except by rotation. If, in a federated situation, a Methodist pastor must leave to give way for one coming from another denomination, he has to find an opening in his Methodist conference or else remain without a church until such an opening is found.

Under the present American pattern of multiple denominations, most major denominations offer local churches well-planned and self-contained organizational structure and program. We feel that a federated church is feasible only when it permanently adopts one of its constituent denomination's program and lets it become a guide for the total church, while retaining its broad membership. This assures that some particular denomination has responsibility for pastoral services and that all aspects of the local program correlate.

Thus we view a federated church as a last resort when denominational organization is impossible and when some other form of cooperation cannot be adopted.

Non-Denominational Church

We cannot feel that the "non-denominational" local church adequately serves the best interests of its community or its membership. Lack of denominational ties usually means an ineffective mission outreach, self-centered program, forefeiture of interchurch fellowship, and a limitation of those men who might be considered as pastors. The local program and organization is in constant danger of change and confusion with each change of pastors. This type of church often becomes a denomination within itself.

"South Dakota's Christian Martyrs"

• In 1955 the South Dakota Legislature passed a bill that later became law denying to the Hutterian Brethren, a rural religious sect living in colonies organized in communal corporations under state charter, "the right to create any new organizations or to expand their operations," writes Richard S. Meryman, Jr., in an article, titled above, in *Harper's* New York, December, 1958. Mr. Meryman is religion editor of *Life*.

In a test case, the Supreme Court of the state expressed the opinion that the law of 1955 is constitutional. The Hutterites "must search in other states to support their rapidly increasing numbers."

Mr. Meryman found much hostility expressed by South Dakota citizens toward the Hutterites. "The group was despised, apparently, for being prolific, efficient, and different, and I wondered suddenly how much of the persecution of the earliest Christians, whom the sect imitates, stemmed from simply being different." After hearing the critics of the Hutterites, Mr. Meryman thought it was time to meet them and know those who held to the doctrine of "all things in common."

Among many others are these descriptions:

"The sect originated in Moravia in 1528 as ultrafundamentalist dissenters in an Anabaptist sect called the 'Swiss Brethren.' . . . The dissenters insisted on community-of-goods, and had as their first Minister a Tyrolean hat maker named Jacob Hutter (after the German word for hat). Hutter not only gave his name to the sect, but laid down the laws and customs which still survive.

"After two hundred years of persecution, usually brought on by the refusal to bear arms, the small retaining group of communal Hutterites ironically received sanctuary in then monarchist Russia. The Emperor promised the Hutterites one hundred years of freedom from army service. The pact was kept, but was not renewed ninety-nine years later.

"In 1874, to avoid military duty, 250 Hutterites emigrated from Russia to South Dakota, forming the Bon Homme and Wolf Creek Colonies near the Nebraska border. In the depression and droughts of the 1930s, the industrious Hutterites were welcomed throughout the Dakotas and Montana as people able to buy farms and bolster the farm industry. But they still refused to bear arms and in both world wars were Conscientious Objectors. Currently there is a continuous crew of Hutterite draftees in C.O. camps building roads and dams in the Black Hills." —B. Y. L.

The Clam

LESLIE T. WELLS

Deep beneath the water,
Hidden in the sand,
Doing what he oughter
Lies a hard-shell clam.

He never says "Good morning,"
Nor gathers with the gay.
He shuts up tight on warning
Of foot-steps down his way.

He just grows old and harder,
And deeper in his fears;
Till he's too tough for chowder,
And dies from added years.

Town and Country Commission on the State Level

From the Seminar Report

• An unofficial count listed twenty-nine states as having some kind of town and country church work, although not all of these have active Town and Country Commissions.

Typical of the significant types of activities carried on by the several state councils in the Town and Country field are the following:

1. The Rural Development program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to aid low-income areas of the nation. Town and Country commissions of state councils of churches are involved in this program, and others are urged to participate.

2. In-Service Training: a) Twenty programs are now being conducted in land-grant colleges. Similar opportunities would be made available elsewhere, if there were some demand from the church; b) One-day institutes of various sorts are widely held. These seem to be most successful when they are localized, rather than attempted on a state-wide basis, when they deal with one specific topic, such as Larger Parishes, federated churches, churching sparsely settled areas, etc.; c) Area clinics take account of new sociological units being formed in the wake of centralized schools and provide an on-going program of outreach in a community.

3. The problems of over-churching and under-churching—survey of the new fringe areas and church and population study.

Some of the forms of organization in Town and Country work and the principles under which they operate were discussed:

1. The Division of Town and Country Church, an integral part of the state council of churches, made up entirely of denominational representatives with either part-time or full-time staff.

2. Denominational executives forming a Town and Country Commission related to the state council of churches, without staff.

3. Commission made up of denominational representatives without staff, with work done on a voluntary basis.

4. Division made up of representatives of denominations, plus extension service, Grange, Farm Bureau, etc., with a Christian Rural Fellowship closely tied in. Salary of staff partially from CROP.

5. A service to the churches through Rural Sociology Extension, operating as the Town and Country Department of the state council of churches, with budget an integral part of the council's budget. Board is semi-autonomous and includes representatives from agricultural as well as church groups.

Regarding several of these organizational patterns a question was raised by the group about non-church agencies participating in policy making.

Recommendations

That the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches gather and make available organizational patterns of state town and country departments, including budgetary matters, activities, policies and their development, and outline the distinctions existing.

That after the above material has been gathered, a conference be planned for staff working at the state level, both volunteer and paid workers.

STANLEY SKINNER
DONALD W. SCHLICHER

The seminar reports on this page and the following are part of the report of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at York, Pennsylvania, October 21-23, 1958. Space requirements prevented our printing them in the February issue of this periodical.

Church Cooperation
From the Seminar Report

• There are varied problems and vast potential for the answer of these problems in the town and country communities. The Church of Jesus Christ is immediately rendered impotent to give a clear and virile witness to its community because of the disunity of its several constituent parts. The great need for practical answers which give expression to this sinful state of the Church is our great quest.

To begin, each local church must understand the community of individuals and families and agencies that compose it. Through this knowledge it will achieve a concern and an all inclusive program that grows out of the comprehensive nature of the Christian faith which provides for the development of "whole people" who make a "whole society."

Many forms of ecumenical experience are a part of the dynamic changes toward good that are occurring in town and country communities today. Among these are the union church, federated church, yoked field, community church, group ministry, as well as the larger parish, ministerial association and county council of churches.

The interdenominational larger parish method of ministering to an entire community provides the best answer for the town and country church. The Dale Hollow Larger Parish in Tennessee is cited as an illustration. In Dale Hollow, twenty-eight churches, representing four denominations (Christian, Cumberland Presbyterian, Methodist, and

(*Continued on Page* 10)

(*Continued from Page* 9)

United Presbyterian, U.S.A.) have bound themselves together for cooperative work. They have a constitution, a representative council, an executive committee, functional departments which administer the program, and a budget which matches the program. A trained pastoral ministry and many consecrated laymen work together in this program to give clear answers to opportunities of community self-improvement over a two-county mountain area. This work is in its fifteenth year.

Strong points of this type of cooperative program are: 1) churches give answers to problems instead of creating more problems; 2) the church is in position to cooperate with all agencies of the community because it has a voice and it is conversant with their problems and needs; 3) community agencies become acquainted with the purpose of the church and assist it with its program; 4) it attracts a more able ministry; 5) it establishes high morale and enlists more laymen with zeal and enthusiasm; 6) denominational national and area leaders find a common ground of meeting to discuss answers in grass-roots ecumenicity; 7) it provides a training ground for students to gain in-service training in ecumenical church problems; 8) "across the board" agency cooperation achieves an establishment of Christian Community through the multiplication of influence.

George Kerr
Vinton Bradshaw

Recruiting for Church Vocations

From the Seminar Report

• It is necessary to distinguish between "Christian vocation" and "church-related vocation." Every Christian who brings a Christian attitude to his choice of work and to his daily carrying out of his task has a Christian vocation. A particular phase of "Christian vocation" is the "church-related vocation," where the person works full time for the church.

There are many opportunities for different church-related vocations, but many people are not aware of them. We need to get information about these opportunities into the local church.

There are several problems to consider in recruitment for church vocations: 1) Many persons feel that home missions are not as important as foreign missions, and these people need to have the vision of the mission of the church to the whole world; 2) There is an attitude, all too often, that the rural church is only a stepping stone, and that the size of salary and church are indicative of capability. This attitude is found on three levels—the administration, the ministers, and the laity; 3) Our basic problem is to build a Christian philosophy of vocation in our congregations and to present the challenge to serve.

Recruiting methods may be divided, according to those who are responsible:

1. *The General Church.* a) The church needs to create situations in which it is possible to hear God's call to serve. There might be an area retreat, planned and sponsored by seminaries or some church agency. If great care is exercised, a visiting team or a speakers' bureau could bring this challenge to the local church; b) The council of churches or local ministerial association should supply vocational guidance directors—in the high school with information about available church vocations and educational aid available in this field.

2. *The Local Congregation.* a) Work on building in the congregation a sense of call in all areas of life. Confront the congregation with concrete situations; b) Capitalize on outstanding Christian leaders, ministerial and lay, that come to the community by having them meet with the promising youth of the church; c) Get laymen to work on recruiting. They can do this through counseling in youth groups, by expressing a personal interest in those who have gone out from the church, and by practicing good stewardship and good attitudes toward church workers; d) Get the youth involved in church activities. Give promising youth a chance to work in the local church program and encourage and make it possible for them to take part in summer service activities.

3. *The Family.* a) Parents must be confronted with the call to challenge their children to a life of service rather than a life of ease; b) Parents need to discuss the meaning of Christian vocation with their children and help them face the call of church-related vocations.

4. *Individuals. a)* The personal touch of making contacts, of encouragement, have great weight; b) Pastors need to counsel with high-school youth about vocation; c) Church workers must be personal witnesses to the joy and fullness of a life of service. God works through men, and men must work with God to present the call and provide help and opportunities for church-related vocations.

E. W. Mueller
Rosemary Nixon

A Brick

• A brick is made of clay. A brick is square and plumb and true. A brick is soft and useless until the magic alchemy of fire has transformed its muddy texture into adamant. A brick is not so showy as marble, but is far more easy to obtain and is much more useful. A brick may occupy a humble place, but it does its share in the creation of the mighty building.

If a man deserves the compliment he is sometimes called a brick.

—William Barrett Millard

Why I Go to the Convocation

Every year, since its beginning in 943, I have attended the annual ational Convocation on the Church n Town and Country. In 1958, it as held at York, Pennsylvania. This ear, 1959, it will be held at Louisille, Kentucky. Every once in a hile a brother pastor will say to e, "What do you go for?" Or, he ill say, "After all, I can sit down nd read the report at home and get ist as much out of it." Or, "Well, 's just another meeting—I have to ay home and get my work done." ow, of course, there is a measure of uth in many of these reasons for ot going. Permit me to tell you hy I do.

I go because I feel the need of eeping abreast of the "changing ural scene." Going to this Convocaon is like a refresher course for a own and country pastor. The quiet one's own study just doesn't quite ll that need.

We need to take advantage of this portunity of "keeping up on ings" in a more direct, personal ay. It does one good to hear the xperts" in person, meet them, and lk with them. I've discovered that ost of these experts really know hat they are talking about. This oesn't mean that I necessarily alays agree with their points of view, ut then isn't there real value in etting the opposite point of view nce in a while and giving it a good hink"? Not all of us are experts every phase of our work—in fact, ery few of us have the time in a usy pastorate to become experts in l phases of our own work. Therere, I've discovered that many times ese experts help me to crystallize y own thinking and approach to ural problems, and suggest to me hat and how I ought to be talking the folks back home in the local urch.

I find it impossible to keep up on ings the way I should by staying vay from this kind of meeting, hich is designed to help me as a ral pastor. It's nothing short of an -Service Training course.

I go because I feel the need of getng out of isolation. Some of us ral pastors are definitely limited in our contacts while on the local field. Some of us go to seed because we never get out of the backyard of our own daily routine work. Attending the Convocation keeps one from getting into a "rut" in thinking and in the organization and administration of our parish work, not to mention preaching.

It's good to discover that other town and country pastors are wrestling with the same problems that I have and that they are searching for solutions, just as I am. I can think of no better way for us to find them than to sit down in groups and take part in discussions on current rural problems. Sometimes it gives you a real jolt, which is good, occasionally, for all of us.

Then, too, if you've never been to the Convocation and heard those "boys" sing—well, you've never really been inspired! To raise your voice in hymns with almost a thousand others—crossing denominational lines—gives you that spiritual lift that I hear so many of our rural pastors crying for! This sort of thing helps me to go back to my work with a new enthusiasm, zeal and courage that few other meetings have the power to do. And let's not be kidding ourselves about the kind of Christianity that is going on in rural America! Rural America is in as desperate need of "Christianizing" as any other area in America.

I go to the Convocation because of another reason: I want to see the wholesome demonstration of church cooperation and ecumenicity. This interdenominational Convocation is the best place to see this practiced and discussed. I come away from the Convocation every year deeply impressed with the fact that here is a group that really practices what it preaches on this whole matter of church cooperation and ecumenicity. It really warms your heart to rub elbows with pastors from other denominations who really believe that Christian cooperation will save the rural church in America. Somehow you feel that "I am glad that I am engaged in the work of the Lord in rural America."

As for myself, I wouldn't miss the opportunity for anything. If I come away from this Convocation each year with just one good idea for helping me in my own work on the local field, I figure it's worth all the cost, time, and energy expended in going.

Better go next year, Pastor—for your own good!

FRANK R. MEASE
VAIL, IOWA

A Rural-Church Project in Wisconsin

• The Grant County, Wis., Fellowship of Churches has set up an interdenominational Land and Job Committee, it is reported in *Town and Country Spires,* September, 1958, journal of the United Church of Christ, forwarding the work of the Town and Country Departments of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches, 1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis 3, Mo., and 19 So. LaSalle St., Chicago 3, Ill.

"The function of the Committee is two-fold: On the one side, they seek to help the rural youth of these congregations to find the jobs, both on and off farms, which will make it possible for them to live and prosper as permanent citizens of their rural communities and parishes. This involves maintaining an inventory of jobs available and a file of farms which can be bought or rented. Young people looking for permanent employment in the county are encouraged to counsel with the Committee.

"The other responsibility accepted by this Committee is to help farmers to appreciate the importance of selling or renting their farms, upon their retirement, to young people belonging to the congregations associated with the Grant County Fellowship of Churches.

"Young people from other areas who might be interested in farming opportunities in Grant County, located in the southwest corner of the dairy state, should write for a description of farms available to Mr. John L. Pettit, Stitzer, Wisconsin."

The Churches and Agricultural Policy

• A Study Packet on The Churches and Agricultural Policy is now available from the Department of the Church and Economic Life, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., for $1.00. Included in the packet are the following: a paper-bound copy of *Social Responsibility in Farm Leadership,* by Walter W. Wilcox, and a study guide to be used with it; *Ethical Goals for Agricultural Policy*—a statement adopted by the General Board of the National Council of Churches; and a statement on "Representative Actions of Official Church Bodies on Subjects included in the statement on Ethical Goals for Agricultural Policy."

This packet was prepared jointly by the Board of Social and Economic Relations of the Methodist Church and the National Council of Churches' Department of the Church and Economic Life.

Prayer for the New Year

• For the gift of time, our Father, for opportunity to make this time worthy in thy sight, we give thee thanks. May we wisely spend the days and years that lie ahead. May we draw nearer to thee, knowing thou wilt draw nearer to us.

Guide us with thy Holy Spirit, that in our homes we may radiate thy presence, at work we may be alert to do Christian deeds, in our neighborhood our conversation may be uplifting, in our church our willing participation may strengthen the impact of thy Word, in our hearts that our thoughts and prayers may honor thee.

In this new year, may we follow with deeper dedication thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. *Amen.*

—Hugh Outterson

It is the little things that annoy us. We can sit on a mountain but not a tack.

Adult Education in a Midwestern Rural Community

MILAN LAMBERTSON

• Cousin Gladys was leaving, after a short visit at the farm. "Really," she exclaimed breezily, "I don't see how you stand it, out here away from everything. I'd wither up in a month! You're used to it, but I have to have the city, and things going on, and big stores, and culture."

Gladys blushed a little, thinking maybe she'd said something wrong. But Ray Farmer, though he gave a slight sniff of disapproval, had a tolerant shrug of the shoulders and walked with her to her car. As soon as they had waved goodbye and her car kicked up puffs of dust on the farm lane, Ray returned to the house. He had noticed in the *Farm Journal* an article on artificial insemination that he had been eager to read. He was barely settled down in the comfortable chair near the kitchen freezer, though, when Mrs. Farmer began to question him about their day's schedule.

"Ray, are you going to that terracing demonstration today? I've been wanting to go to the cooking class that the demonstration agent is having in Middleville, but maybe you'll need the car."

"No, that's O.K., Irene. Go ahead and take it. I don't mind using the pick-up. I'll drop Sister off at school on the way." Ray finished the magazine article with concentration, only cocking his head toward the radio when the weather report was being given. As school time neared, he and his daughter climbed into their half-ton truck. Fourteen years old and an active member of Sunday School, Youth Fellowship and various school groups, she was rather excited about a part on the 4-H Club program she was to have that night.

"I'm a little leery, trying to show those types of flower arrangements, especially since several of the mothers are going to be there. I'd fall through the floor if I pulled a boo-boo!"

"Don't worry, Sister," her father laughed reassuringly. "You kids can always teach us grown-ups something, if you've studied up on it. Remember how Mother said she learned some things herself about preparing foods for the freezer, at the 4-H Fair? And anybody who can win a blue ribbon at the fair can surely demonstrate something at a club meeting."

The girl beamed at the compliment. Yes, she *had* made a good showing of her entries in the fair. But they were arriving at the school now, and she reached for her books. She gave a gay "So long" to her father as he drove off.

The 4-H is a good deal, Ray Farmer thought. Too bad we don't have a regular 4-H agent, like they do in Jackson County. The county agent is busy enough, without 4-H club work piled on him too. Ray particularly liked their agent. He was a sensible fellow, who could always be relied on, whether it was some advice on marketing Ray needed, or some wise tip on how to reclaim an ugly gully cutting back from the creek. Ray remembered that time when his pigs were dying mysteriously, and the county agricultural agent followed up Ray's S.O.S. for help by contacting animal husbandry experts at the state ag college, who diagnosed the problem correctly.

Irene Farmer also had cause to be thankful for the Extension Service, which provided not only the county agricultural agent but also the woman who was home demonstration agent. Mrs. Farmer was rather eager to get to the cooking class, but she did feel a little guilty going away from home so often. If it wasn't the Missionary Society at the church, or Rebekahs, or P.T.A., it was something else. Then there was the Plainview Literary Club, where the women discussed authors that Cousin Gladys, with all her urban culture, had never heard of. Sundays were busy with church services, morning and evening, and on Wednesday

nights there was the Bible study and prayer meeting; choir practice too, if Grandma didn't mind waiting a little longer. She and Grandma were the only ones who went from their household on Wednesday nights. Irene wished that she could get Ray interested in the church choir, or even in the Community Chorus, that combined the vocal talents of the whole village of Plainview. And as if she hadn't enough to do already, she was taking a correspondence course from the state university! It was stimulating to be in so many things, but sometimes she got so involved (so "wound up inside," she expressed it) that she had to turn on the Classical Hour or read some reassuring verses of the *Psalms* to relax.

But Mrs. Farmer was thinking of her son and mother-in-law, too. "I'm sorry always to be running off and leaving them at home," she mused. "There seemed to be less to interest them in their community than people of other ages. Ray, Jr., was puttering around, now that he was a high school graduate, just marking time till college began in the fall. He was a little out of the stream of church life, and occasionally complained, "There's nothing to do in this town!" Of course, his Dad could think of things to do around the farm, but Junior's leisure activities seemed to bog down like a smooth-tired car in their lane after a heavy rain. Watching their TV and hearing radio music, or taking the girl-friend to a movie at Middleville, was about all he could think of that was interesting to do.

With Grandma it was a little different. She was more resourceful and sociable, and had a group of close friends, though her contacts were limited. When Ray's father had died, she had come to spend her widowhood with them, vacating the other house on the farm. But soon the other house was again occupied, for Ray had rented some more land to farm, and he got Claude Stumbo for a hired man. Claude and Clara Stumbo and their baby daughter had moved into the little house, and had lived there not quite a year.

Grandma was on the phone. "No, I hadn't forgotten about quilting this afternoon. I'll be there. Irene is at a cooking class this morning, and Ray went to the terracing demonstration, but they'll be back. I'll have dinner ready for them at noon, and then one of them can run me into town to the church. I wouldn't miss the quilting circle for anything!" She glanced up and saw the rural mail-carrier stop at their box at the end of the lane. "Oh, I see the mail has come. I'd better tell Junior to go out and get it. . . ."

Besides her church life, which seemed to sustain Grandma socially as well as spiritually, her other deep interest was in the little Free Library maintained in a vacant store on the main street of Plainview. As a former rural schoolteacher, she liked books. Everybody knew that the library was Grandma Farmer's baby, and it received most of its nourishment from her. She it was who gradually increased its 2,000-odd number of volumes by wheedling a few books of recent fiction from the Plainview Bridge Club or some significant non-fiction titles she had suggested to the Literary Club. She even included some mission study books from two of the three churches since there was no church in town which had its own library. Grandma wished they had more books for children, and less donations of the comic books, which she occasionally censored severely, and chucked into the pot-bellied stove when nobody was looking. High point in the library month was the day when the state traveling library book-mobile came by, and lent them books till the next month's visit. The next Saturday evening (the library was only open then) the ones from the book-mobile would be the first to go out.

When noon came, and Sister was eating a hot meal in the new high school lunchroom, Ray and Irene were back, and they and Junior were sampling Grandma's cooking. Irene happened to remark how little Clara Stumbo seemed to leave the farm.

"She never goes anywhere," Irene commented.

"She stays home and practices cooking, while you go to a cooking class," Ray teased.

"But, seriously," she said thoughtfully, "she'd cook better if she could attend some classes. But she didn't want to go with me this morning. Says the baby's too much trouble to take. I think she might like to be in a child care class, if we had one. But she's not interested in clubs or P.T.A. or church. . . ."

"Sometimes," Grandma interrupted, "she hears church programs on the radio."

"Yes, and soap operas by the hour when she's ironing or cooking," Junior volunteered. "Listen tomorrow this same time, to see if Mary O'Leary will avert the tragedy. . . ."

"Oh, hush!" Irene Farmer insisted, to squelch the parody.

It was true, about Clara. And Claude was as bad. Of course, if you had had only an eighth grade education and were a tenant without your roots down in a community, maybe you wouldn't want to do anything except go to the school ballgames or join anything except the American Legion. Claude would like TV, but they didn't have a set. He listened to mountain music on the radio, but even turned off the newscasts. How could a person be so unconcerned about world affairs? How could the Stumbos be so uninterested, when they, the Farmers, were so involved in community affairs and interest groups?

* * *

What sources of adult education does this community have? We might try to list them:

- Farm magazine
- Terracing demonstration (Soil Conservation Service)
- Cooking class (Home demonstration agent)
- Radio (weather and news reports, Classical Hour, etc.)
- Television
- Sunday School, church services
- County agricultural agent
- Missionary Society
- I.O.O.F. and Rebekahs
- Parent-Teacher Association
- Literary Club
- Wednesday Bible study & prayer meeting, choir practice
- Community Chorus
- Correspondence course from university
- Home reading (Bible, etc.)
- Movies in county seat town
- Quilting circle
- Rural Free Delivery of mail
- Free Library
- Bridge Club
- Book-mobile of state traveling library
- American Legion

PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER + RESOURCES = A GREAT NATION!

Order of Service

• Rural Life Sunday, the fifth after Easter, or Rogation Sunday, will be held on May 3rd this year.

The Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches has published an order of service for use by a congregation. It has been prepared for the Department by the Rev. E. W. Mueller, director of town and country church work for the National Lutheran Council.

Copies may be obtained from your cooperating home mission board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

Listen!

• Two men were walking along a crowded sidewalk in a downtown business area. Suddenly one of the men exclaimed, "Listen to the lovely sound of that cricket!" But the other could not hear. He asked his companion how he could detect the sound of a cricket amid the din of people and traffic. The first man, who was a zoologist, had trained himself to hear the marvelous voices of nature. But he didn't explain. He simply took a coin from his pocket and dropped it to the sidewalk, whereupon a dozen people began to look about them. "We hear," he said, "what we listen for."

KERMIT L. LONG in *Streams of Healing* compiled by Lester R. Liles (Fleming H. Revell Company).

★ ★ ★

Ladies from North Dakota

• Twenty-two bright and eager homemakers from North Dakota attended a dinner meeting in New York convened by the American Association for the United Nations, and the fact that there were so many of them "came as a shock" to William E. Bohn, editor of *The New Leader,* he reports in that periodical, December 15, 1958. "Who were they? What were they up to? Isn't the West isolationist anymore?"

"We belong to the Farmers' Union," was an explanation that they gave to Mr. Bohn's questions. The group chartered a bus for the visit to New York and the United Nations. On the way an officer of the Farmers' Union "used a loudspeaker" to read literature of that farm organization and of the United Nations.

BOOK REVIEWS

Land: the 1958 Yearbook of Agriculture. The United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. $2.25 from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D.C.

It is difficult for anyone who has had a part in planning an undertaking to be truly objective in its analysis. Therefore, when I say I am sure the 1958 Yearbook on "Land" will be rated as one of the best in the Yearbook of Agriculture series, you need to be aware that the book is being viewed through the paternal eyes of one who encouraged its preparation, shared in its development, and looks upon the results as the fulfillment of a cherished hope.

In 1950, a group of us began a movement for the preparation of a yearbook concerned with the land in the United States. Land is an essential resource required to meet the basic human wants of food, shelter, and clothing. Moreover, land use and needs have changed greatly during the past two decades. We, therefore, felt that a critical examination of the role of this resource in our nation's development and its potential for the future would be of value to anyone interested in preserving and improving our American way of abundant living.

The 1958 Yearbook on "Land" does not cover every aspect of land, nor does it provide answers to all land problems. However, the 93 authorities who discuss the subjects in the 67 chapters and 605 pages do cover the major land problems and provide a wealth of valuable factual information that will help interested persons to see what is happening.

The book deals with the importance of land in the history and growth of our country; the use and management of public and private lands; valuation of land and other financial aspects; the emerging problems of ownership and control of land; changing needs stemming from a growing population and increasing urbanization; changes in the size and character of farms; and competition for land and other land use problems. This is a book that economists, teachers, farmers, sociologists, rural pastors, and the general public should have in their libraries. The story of land is told in a scholarly and yet oftentimes lively manner, and always in language which the average reader can both understand and appreciate.

Land is good reading—well planned and well coordinated. Reading it will help develop an understanding of the importance of land, the growing needs and problems with respect to land, and trends shaping the future. The book does not attempt to develop programs and policies. It does stimulate thinking and may arouse strong opinions. It should prove provocative in spurring us on to "forward looking" action.

The book design is very handsome and inviting. The cover, carrying photographs of farm scenes on a dark green background, with drawings of two modern means of communication—a television set and a telephone—in the corners, conveys the spirit of the book and beckons to the reader. Upon opening the book the reader is greeted with a section of well chosen prints and photographs showing the beauty and splendor of nature and the changing scene as the United States progressed from pioneer days to the present. In addition, charts, maps, and drawings scattered throughout the book clarify and supplement the written word and further enhance the attractiveness of the book.

The reader of this book will find himself thinking with greater pride about our beautiful and bountiful country and regarding with a heightened sense of stewardship our rich land resources. This is a book for reading pleasure as well as for serious study, and it is a volume to treasure as a reference.

—Joseph Ackerman

Pilgrim Parson: The Life of James Herbert Bainton. By Roland H. Bainton. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York. 1958. $2.50.

James Herbert Bainton (1867-1942) was a pilgrim parson for forty-nine years. He served only four charges in small towns, with congregations never numbering more than two hundred. These charges were in three different countries: England, Canada and the United States. When he arrived at the Congregational church in Cheshire, Connecticut, he was surprised to find that he was the minister of what was once an "established" church. In England he was born into a society in which the free churches and the ministers were penalized in various ways.

James Herbert Bainton was much at home on the village green and delighted in the natural environment of New England. His talks abounded with references to "ordinary sights and objects." He was sensitive to the various roles that the minister must play and had the habit of calling on all the people.

The son, Roland H. Bainton of the Yale Divinity School, writes a warm biography with a beautiful tribute; he also interprets the life and work of a parish minister in such a way as to produce a document of high value to students of that vocation.

—Benson Y. Landis

The Use of Time

• Our heavenly Father, we ask you to guide us that we may use well the time you have given us. May we take time each day to do the things which are important to our family —grace at meals, family worship; time to read good books, enjoy good music, and share moments of happiness together. May our home please you and be filled with your presence. We ask in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

—Mrs. George R. Holcombe (from *The Family at Prayer,* published by The Upper Room, Nashville, Tenn.

Rural Life Sunday*

• Rural Life Sunday, or Rogation Sunday, occurs on the fifth Sunday after Easter as a traditional observance of the church to emphasize man's dependence on Almighty God. This celebration had its origin in a day when the vast majority of people were tillers of the soil, society was relatively simple in structure, and the lines separating rural and urban were rather distinct. In such a day, the singular invocation of God's blessing upon the tiller, the seed, and the soil, was meaningful and highly relevant. The homogeneity of society and the primary place of agriculture as an occupation made an agriculturally oriented observance quite appropriate.

In the ensuing years, however, rural life has changed. Instead of the simple rural community in which most people were employed in agriculture, we now have a complex society with a great diversity of occupation. In this new rural community an observance of Rural Life Sunday oriented only to agriculture is no longer satisfactory.

Therefore, in order to continue the original emphasis of man's dependence upon God and to make the observance more relevant to the lives of people presently living in rural society, yet employed outside of agriculture, the Church must broaden the emphasis of Rural Life Sunday. This means a re-statement of purpose and policy and the creation of ceremonies and service suggestions which take into account the vast complexity of present-day rural America (including agriculture) as being under the sovereignty of God and in need of his blessing.

To clarify the purpose of Rural Life Sunday in the context of this modern day, and to improve the use made of it by Christians generally, we recommend that the National Council of Churches encourage the constituent communions to accept the following principles as guides in the observance of that day.

1. That everything possible be done on this day to bring the full impact of God's sovereignty and the need for his blessing to bear on modern rural society in the midst of a changed and changing rural America.
2. That for the purpose of finding the areas of imperfection and subjecting them to the refining and redeeming power of God, the Church shall on this day emphasize the fact that all of rural life is under the judgment of God.
3. That rural man shall on this day be led to find in his daily work a sense of vocation which means that his toil is to the honor and glory of God and to the enrichment of the life of his brother.
4. That American society (both rural and urban) be led to see on this day the stewardship implications in the use of land and the conservation of natural resources, recognizing that all belongs to God.
5. That all possible be done on this day to deal realistically with rural man's need for community in the midst of changing conditions vitally affecting his mechanisms for maintaining such community.

In order to put into practice these principles, the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. will seek to interpret the nature of Rural Life Sunday (Rogation Sunday) to the churches and rural life agencies to the end that all involved may bring their activities into harmony with the basic nature of the observance.

I. To assist the member communions in observance of the day, the department will seek to provide materials and suggestions, such as
   - A. a basic manual on Rural Life Sunday observance containing:
     1. a statement of purpose and philosophy of the observance;
     2. suggested orders of service for several types of churches (rural, urban, liturgical, non-liturgical, etc.);
     3. activities other than worship which might make a contribution;
     4. suggestions as to how the church can work with 4-H, FFA, farm organizations, government programs, civic clubs, labor unions, etc., in the observance;
     5. suggestions as to how rural and urban churches can work together creatively in the observance;
     6. list of resources—films, books, pamphlets, litanies, prayers, etc.
   - B. a pattern of annual emphases for the purpose of dramatizing the various elements of modern rural life and providing a focal point to which rural life agencies and programs may be rallied for the observance.

II. To the end that a high degree of coordination may be achieved in the approaches made to rural people for the purpose of changing or enriching rural life, the Department of Town and Country Church will encourage rural life agencies, developmental or remedial rural life programs, and voluntary rural life associations, to establish better working relationships with the churches regarding this historic day.

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* Designation may be "Rural Life Sabbath" by those churches which observe the seventh day as the Sabbath.

This statement was prepared by the Department of Town and Country Church and adopted by the General Board of the National Council of Churches.